

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

Extension of Remarks

Veterans Day

November 11, 2008

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Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota: Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Veterans Day. This national holiday serves as reminder of the enormous sacrifices that brave men and women have made for the ideals and beliefs that all Americans value. Veterans Day is also an opportunity to give thanks to the hundreds of thousands of armed forces personnel serving our country to protect our nation and to secure the peace around the world.

To mark this special holiday, I had the honor of attending both a ceremony for Mexican American Post 5, where I learned of the hardships faced by American soldiers of Mexican descent, and the Minnesota State Veterans Day program to pay tribute to the men and women serving our country in uniform. This year, I also

had the privilege of visiting our troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan to witness the tremendous sacrifice they and their families make each day.

On the battlefield, the U.S. Armed Forces pledge to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, it must be our promise that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind. Fully preparing our troops, and providing the necessary healthcare, education, and disability benefits to meet the needs of our veterans, is our responsibility and moral obligation.

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The 110th Congress has honored our commitment to veterans by making their needs a priority. This Congress passed the largest funding increase in the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs, which ensures that our veterans returning from IraqAfghanistan receive the quality health and mental health care they deserve. This year, we have also provided tax relief for military families, increased pay for members of our armed services, established a suicide prevention program, improved housing assistances for homeless veterans, and helped military families avoid home foreclosure. Lastly, this Democratic led Congress passed a GI bill for the 21st century that fully restores four-year college scholarships for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, on a par with the educational benefits after World War II. and

The men and women of the armed forces who have served this country with honor during times of war and peace deserve the best this country

can afford. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress and President Obama to ensure veterans receive the highest level of care and compensation they have so bravely earned serving this country. This is a commitment to which I hold fast on Veterans Day and everyday.

To all veterans, you have my thanks and that of a grateful nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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